



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

CANADIAN NABBED SMUGGLING CASH OUT OF THE U.S.

Jeweler caught trying to smuggle jewelry and \$279,000 out of United States

ROUSES POINT, N.Y.— A Canadian jeweler has been charged with attempting to smuggle \$279,775 in U.S. currency out of the country in violation of reporting laws, Michael Bridgeman, Resident Agent-in-Charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Rouses Point, announced today.

In addition to the cash smuggling charge, Jirayr Cerrahyan, a Canadian citizen, has been charged with smuggling more than 3,000 pieces of jewelry and 50 vials of growth hormones out of the United States into Canada.

On May 27, Cerrahyan had stopped at the Champlain, N.Y., port of entry to declare more than \$250,000 in U.S. currency along with a check for \$186,703. (By law, individuals must report anything over \$10,000 being transported either into or out of the United States). He stopped at the port to file currency-monitoring forms with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers.

One of the officers became suspicious and a secondary inspection of the vehicle uncovered an additional \$279,755 in cash, 3,332 pieces of jewelry and 50 vials of suspected steroids in a hidden compartment inside the car. ICE agents responded and took over the lead in the investigation.

Bridgeman noted that a common money laundering technique is to smuggle U.S. currency out of the country, then at a later time bring it back into the United States by reporting it at a port of entry as required by law. The currency reporting law exists to prevent individuals and criminal organizations from transporting money from illegal activities across international borders in order to launder it.

The jewelry has an estimated value of \$169,377. The total value of the currency and check seized is \$793,153.

ICE agents will continue the investigation to determine the origin of the money and jewelry and determine if other laws have been broken. Cerrahyan had an initial appearance in U.S. District Court on May 28 and was ordered held without bond.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.